# The GNU Go Compiler

For GCC version 4.7.1

(GCC)

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# Introduction

This manual describes how to use gccgo, the GNU compiler for the Go programming language. This manual is specifically about gccgo. For more information about the Go programming language in general, including language specifications and standard package documentation, see http://golang.org/.

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## 1 Invoking gccgo

The gccgo command is a frontend to gcc and supports many of the same options. See Section "Option Summary" in Using the GNU Compiler Collection (GCC). This manual only documents the options specific to gccgo.

The gccgo command may be used to compile Go source code into an object file, link a collection of object files together, or do both in sequence.

Go source code is compiled as packages. A package consists of one or more Go source files. All the files in a single package must be compiled together, by passing all the files as arguments to gccgo. A single invocation of gccgo may only compile a single package.

One Go package may import a different Go package. The imported package must have already been compiled; gccgo will read the import data directly from the compiled package. When this package is later linked, the compiled form of the package must be included in the link command.

-Idir Specify a directory to use when searching for an import package at compile time.

-Ldir When linking, specify a library search directory, as with gcc.

#### -fgo-pkgpath=string

Set the package path to use. This sets the value returned by the PkgPath method of reflect.Type objects. It is also used for the names of globally visible symbols. The argument to this option should normally be the string that will be used to import this package after it has been installed; in other words, a pathname within the directories specified by the '-I' option.

#### -fgo-prefix=string

An alternative to '-fgo-pkgpath'. The argument will be combined with the package name from the source file to produce the package path. If '-fgo-pkgpath' is used, '-fgo-prefix' will be ignored.

Go permits a single program to include more than one package with the same name in the package clause in the source file, though obviously the two packages must be imported using different pathnames. In order for this to work with gccgo, either '-fgo-pkgpath' or '-fgo-prefix' must be specified when compiling a package.

Using either '-fgo-pkgpath' or '-fgo-prefix' disables the special treatment of the main package and permits that package to be imported like any other.

-frequire-return-statement

#### -fno-require-return-statement

By default gccgo will warn about functions which have one or more return parameters but lack an explicit return statement. This warning may be disabled using '-fno-require-return-statement'.

#### -fgo-check-divide-zero

Add explicit checks for division by zero. In Go a division (or modulos) by zero causes a panic. On Unix systems this is detected in the runtime by catching the SIGFPE signal. Some processors, such as PowerPC, do not generate a SIGFPE

on division by zero. Some runtimes do not generate a signal that can be caught. On those systems, this option may be used. Or the checks may be removed via '-fno-go-check-divide-zero'. This option is currently on by default, but in the future may be off by default on systems that do not require it.

#### -fgo-check-divide-overflow

Add explicit checks for division overflow. For example, division overflow occurs when computing INT\_MIN / -1. In Go this should be wrapped, to produce INT\_MIN. Some processors, such as x86, generate a trap on division overflow. On those systems, this option may be used. Or the checks may be removed via '-fno-go-check-divide-overflow'. This option is currently on by default, but in the future may be off by default on systems that do not require it.

## 2 Import and Export

When gccgo compiles a package which exports anything, the export information will be stored directly in the object file. When a package is imported, gccgo must be able to find the file.

When Go code imports the package 'gopackage', gccgo will look for the import data using the following filenames, using the first one that it finds.

```
'gopackage.gox'
'libgopackage.so'
'libgopackage.a'
'gopackage.o'
```

The compiler will search for these files in the directories named by any '-I' options, in order in which the directories appear on the command line. The compiler will then search several standard system directories. Finally the compiler will search the current directory (to search the current directory earlier, use '-I.').

The compiler will extract the export information directly from the compiled object file. The file 'gopackage.gox' will typically contain nothing but export data. This can be generated from 'gopackage.o' via

```
objcopy -j .go_export gopackage.o gopackage.gox
```

For example, it may be desirable to extract the export information from several different packages into their independent '*gopackage.gox*' files, and then to combine the different package object files together into a single shared library or archive.

At link time you must explicitly tell gccgo which files to link together into the executable, as is usual with gcc. This is different from the behaviour of other Go compilers.

## 3 C Interoperability

When using gccgo there is limited interoperability with C, or with C++ code compiled using extern "C".

### 3.1 C Type Interoperability

Basic types map directly: an int in Go is an int in C, etc. Go byte is equivalent to C unsigned char. Pointers in Go are pointers in C. A Go struct is the same as C struct with the same field names and types.

The Go string type is currently defined as a two-element structure:

```
struct __go_string {
   const unsigned char *__data;
   int __length;
};
```

You can't pass arrays between C and Go. However, a pointer to an array in Go is equivalent to a C pointer to the equivalent of the element type. For example, Go \*[10]int is equivalent to C int\*, assuming that the C pointer does point to 10 elements.

A slice in Go is a structure. The current definition is:

```
struct __go_slice {
   void *__values;
   int __count;
   int __capacity;
};
```

The type of a Go function with no receiver is equivalent to a C function whose parameter types are equivalent. When a Go function returns more than one value, the C function returns a struct. For example, these functions have equivalent types:

func GoFunction(int) (int, float)
struct { int i; float f; } CFunction(int)

A pointer to a Go function is equivalent to a pointer to a C function when the functions have equivalent types.

Go interface, channel, and map types have no corresponding C type (interface is a two-element struct and channel and map are pointers to structs in C, but the structs are deliberately undocumented). C enum types correspond to some integer type, but precisely which one is difficult to predict in general; use a cast. C union types have no corresponding Go type. C struct types containing bitfields have no corresponding Go type. C++ class types have no corresponding Go type.

Memory allocation is completely different between C and Go, as Go uses garbage collection. The exact guidelines in this area are undetermined, but it is likely that it will be permitted to pass a pointer to allocated memory from C to Go. The responsibility of eventually freeing the pointer will remain with C side, and of course if the C side frees the pointer while the Go side still has a copy the program will fail. When passing a pointer from Go to C, the Go function must retain a visible copy of it in some Go variable. Otherwise the Go garbage collector may delete the pointer while the C function is still using it.

### 3.2 Function Names

Go code can call C functions directly using a Go extension implemented in gccgo: a function declaration may be preceded by a comment giving the external name. The comment must be at the beginning of the line and must start with *//extern*. This must be followed by a space and then the external name of the function. The function declaration must be on the line immediately after the comment. For example, here is how the C function open can be declared in Go:

//extern open

func c\_open(name \*byte, mode int, perm int) int

The C function naturally expects a nul terminated string, which in Go is equivalent to a pointer to an array (not a slice!) of **byte** with a terminating zero byte. So a sample call from Go would look like (after importing the **os** package):

```
var name = [4]byte{'f', 'o', 'o', 0};
i := c_open(&name[0], os.0_RDONLY, 0);
```

Note that this serves as an example only. To open a file in Go please use Go's os.Open function instead.

The name of Go functions accessed from C is subject to change. At present the name of a Go function that does not have a receiver is prefix.package.Functionname. The prefix is set by the '-fgo-prefix' option used when the package is compiled; if the option is not used, the default is simply go. To call the function from C you must set the name using the gcc \_\_asm\_\_ extension.

extern int go\_function(int) \_\_asm\_\_ ("myprefix.mypackage.Function");

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